

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

The President's News Conference With President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya in Nairobi, Kenya

July 25, 2015

President Kenyatta. Please be seated. Thank you. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Let me begin by saying that we have had an excellent afternoon where we've had very frank and, indeed, very fruitful discussions with President Obama on a variety of issues of mutual interest both to Kenya and the United States. This follows the signing of agreements covering areas of mutual interest such as security, visa reciprocity, and the development cooperation, amongst other things.

Our discussions affirmed that Kenya and the United States share deep values in many areas of critical interest. And naturally, therefore, our peoples and governments speak the same language on many issues. Kenya is an open, democratic society, underpinned by an embrace of democracy. We are deepening that democracy while fighting global terrorists who seek to destroy our way of life. Left undefeated, they will redraw the international system and make room for violent extremism and tyranny.

We agreed together that we can build a future in which our people of all faiths, cultures live peacefully together, with the rights of individuals and minorities protected and those in power held to account—held to account by strong and inclusive institutions. I also expressed to President Obama that without building shared prosperity, our vision of a secure Africa and, indeed, a stable world will remain a fragile dream.

It is for this reason that Kenya, an increasingly dynamic country, is continuously opening new trade and investment frontiers across the world. I conveyed the hope that during his tenure in office, the United States would look to develop a strong strategic partnership with Africa built on shared values and interests. I also expressed the hope that his visit would allow him and the people of the United States to gain an even deeper insight on Africa's challenges. And this will enable them to see these challenges as an expression of great opportunities that are available here.

The United States is a country of entrepreneurs with the unique capacity to build transformative businesses, and I hope that these entrepreneurs and investors will recognize and act on the immense opportunities Kenya and Africa present. And in this regard, I also expressed my appreciation of his leadership in shepherding the renewal of AGOA.

Beyond shared values, we are brothers and sisters, fellow travelers in the struggle for a better world for all. And we therefore need to upscale our partnerships in agriculture, infrastructure, and affordable energy. I also expressed my own commitment to ensuring that on our part, we will continue to take the steps that provide the proper conditions for a vibrant ecosystem for investors and entrepreneurs.

We agreed to continue to engage one another so that we can strengthen what is already a robust relationship. And indeed, I look forward to hosting President Obama later this evening and, indeed, also seeing him at the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in September.

President Obama, once again, on my own behalf, on behalf of my Government and the people of Kenya, let me thank you for your support as evidenced by the various agreements

signed between our two governments and, indeed, your willingness to engage Kenya in the true spirit of partnership.

It's now my pleasure to introduce the President to make some brief remarks as well. Thank you.

President Obama. Habari. President Kenyatta, let me just reiterate what I said at the summit earlier: To you and the people of Kenya, thank you for the extraordinary welcome that you've given me and for the same kindness that you've shown to me since my first visit to Kenya nearly 30 years ago. I'm proud to return as the first U.S. President to ever visit Kenya while still in office. I need to give a special acknowledgement to everybody in Alego and Kogello and Kisumu. *[Laughter]*

I'm well aware, however, that the enthusiasm that we're seeing today from my visit is a reflection of something bigger, and that's the desire among the Kenyan people for a deeper partnership with America. And that's why I'm here. My work with President Kenyatta today has been rooted in our shared recognition that the interests of both our nations and the lives of both our peoples can be advanced if our countries deepen and expand our cooperation. And that's what we've agreed to today.

First, I want to salute the Kenyan people for their hard-won progress in strengthening their democracy. Millions voted for the new Constitution, one of the most progressive in Africa, with its strong protections for freedom of expression, assembly, and the press, and its emphasis on equality and against discrimination. The election 2 years ago was competitive and largely peaceful. Kenya has a determined, active, feisty press, as we see here today. And as I've said elsewhere, a free press helps make a nation stronger and more successful, and it makes us leaders more effective because it demands greater accountability. Kenya has a vibrant civil society, which is essential for any democracy, and I look forward to meeting tomorrow with representatives from civil society who stand up for the dignity and rights of all Kenyans.

Dignity begins, of course, with the ability to provide a decent life for our families. And today President Kenyatta and I agreed to expand the economic partnerships between our peoples that can provide broad-based prosperity. We will extend student and business visas for up to 5 years for Kenyans traveling to the United States and for Americans traveling to Kenya. This will make it easier for university students to complete their studies and for businesses to make long-term plans. Our governments are also working to launch direct flights between Kenya and the United States as soon as possible. As part of our Young Leaders—Young African Leaders Initiative, we'll also continue to support promising Kenyan youth as they work to become future leaders in business, civil society, and government.

Now that we've renewed the African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA, for another 10 years, I discussed with President Kenyatta how we can expand our economic cooperation. And we're especially focused on infrastructure and energy, two keys to economic growth. Our Power Africa initiative is supporting Kenya's goal of achieving its national energy needs—electricity for Kenyans—by 2030. And this includes innovations that bring power to rural Kenyans who are off the grid, as I saw earlier today at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit. I also want to commend Kenya, a leader in clean energy, for announcing its post-2020 target to limit carbon emissions as part of our fight against climate change.

Together, we are confronting insidious threats to Kenya's prosperity. President Kenyatta, I want to commend you on your announced commitment to rooting out corruption. With the joint commitment we've agreed to today, the United States will offer advice and technical

assistance to support Kenya as it takes additional steps to increase transparency and accountability and to strengthen institutions that fight corruption. So we're making important commitments, and now we need to work together to fulfill them. Because if Kenya can put in place the habits and institutions of good governance, it can help unleash even greater growth and investment and prosperity for the Kenyan people. And that will be good for everybody.

Our countries are also close partners in the fight against poachers and traffickers that threaten Kenya's world-famous wildlife. The United States has a ban already on the commercial import of elephant ivory. I can announce that we're proposing a new rule that bans the sale of virtually all ivory across our State lines, which will eliminate the market for illegal ivory in the United States.

On security, the United States and Kenya are already strong partners, and today we reaffirm that we stand united in the face of terrorism. Earlier, I had the opportunity to meet with survivors and families of victims of the bombing of our U.S. Embassy in 1998. In the face of despicable violence, such as the attack on Garissa University College and the Westgate Mall, the Kenyan people have shown incredible resolve and remarkable resilience. I also want to pay tribute to the sacrifices of Kenyan forces who serve in the African Union–led mission against al-Shabaab in Somalia, and to thank Kenya for hosting so many Somali refugees, who are also victims of al-Shabaab.

Today we discussed deepening our security cooperation. As part of our Security Governance Initiative, our governments signed an action plan yesterday in which we'll support Kenya's effort to strengthen its judiciary, police, and border security. We also discussed broader efforts to counter violent extremism, here in Kenya and around the world, efforts that are advanced when there is rule of law, respect for human rights, a space for civil society and peaceful dissent, and when we welcome all communities as our partners. All our nations are going to have to work together in order for us to be successful.

We also had the opportunity to discuss regional security issues, and we focused in particular on the terrible conflict in South Sudan, which has taken so many lives, that cause unbearable suffering for the South Sudanese people. The situation is dire. And we agree that the best way to stop the fighting is for South Sudanese leaders to put their country first with a peace agreement that ends the fighting.

We also discussed Burundi, where the recent elections were not credible. And we're calling on the Government and the opposition to come together in a dialogue that leads to a political solution to the crisis and avoids the loss of more innocent life.

And finally, we're going to keep investing in the health and well-being of our people. Our Feed the Future initiative is focused on reducing hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. We're working together to ensure that girls have access to education and that women are protected from violence. Today I can announce that Kenya will be part of our DREAMS initiative to help keep adolescent girls safe and AIDS-free. And across Africa, Kenya and the United States will keep working to strengthen public health systems and deal with outbreaks and diseases before they become epidemics. Together, we can save lives.

So, President Kenyatta, thank you for the progress and new commitments that we've made today. I know that Kenya faces persistent challenges, as does the United States. But I will tell you that every time I come here, I'm struck by the dynamism and the hopefulness, the determination and the talent of the Kenyan people. And I look forward to the opportunity to speak to the people of Kenya tomorrow about the future that we can build together.

So *asante sana*.

You want me to start? Okay.

Mr. Jeff Mason [Reuters].

Kenya-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation/Al-Shabaab Terrorist Organization/Somalia/Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights

Q. Thank you very much. Mr. President, I'd like to ask about two topics. First of all, what more specifically can the U.S. do to help Kenya in the fight against al-Shabaab? Do you still see Somalia as a counterterrorism model? And are you concerned about Kenyan authorities using counterterrorism as an excuse to commit human rights violations?

Secondly, can you comment on the state of gay and lesbian—the treatment of gay and lesbians in Kenya, which rights groups have called dismal and President Kenyatta has called a nonissue?

For you, sir, President Kenyatta, on the same themes, what more do you need from the United States to help fight al-Shabaab, and are you getting it? And can you please also respond to criticism about the state of gay rights in your country?

President Obama. Well, this was an extensive topic of conversation and concrete action that we're now taking. There has been extensive and effective counterterrorism cooperation between the United States and Kenya dealing with primarily threats from al-Shabaab.

In part because of the actions that we've taken not just with Kenya, but with AFRICOM, and the efforts, collectively, of countries to work together—Uganda, Ethiopia, others—we have systematically reduced the territory that al-Shabaab controls. We have been able to decrease their effective control within Somalia and have weakened those networks operating here in East Africa.

That doesn't mean the problem is solved. As is true around the world, what we find is, is that we can degrade significantly the capacities of these terrorist organizations, but they can still do damage. The number of individuals involved in Garissa or Westgate Mall were not large, but when they're willing to target soft targets and civilians, and are prepared to die, they can still do a lot of damage.

And so what we discussed was the importance of, number one, continuing the effort to root out al-Shabaab's capacity inside of Somalia, working jointly. And as we speak, Kenya is working with Ethiopia and with the United States and others to further degrade al-Shabaab's space of operations inside of Somalia. So we have to keep that pressure going, even as we're strengthening the Somali Government. Because part of the reason that al-Shabaab was able to emerge as a significant threat to the region was a nonfunctioning Government, effectively a failed state in Somalia for so long.

There is now a Government and a cabinet that is credible and is working with the international community in Mogadishu. And even as we put military pressure on al-Shabaab, we also have to make sure that we're standing up an effective governance structure inside of Somalia. And we've made progress there.

In addition, we have to continue to make progress in intelligence-sharing and being able to identify and prevent threats before they occur here in Kenya and elsewhere in the region. And part of our announcement today involves additional funding, additional assistance that we're providing the Kenyan security forces to deal with these very specific counterterrorism

threats, as well as additional training and assistance to make sure that the approach that's taken in rooting out potential terrorist threats don't create more problems than they're solving.

And this goes to the other element of the question that you asked. What we have found, sometimes through hard experience—and I shared this with President Kenyatta—is that if you paint any particular community with too broad a brush, if in reaction to terrorism you are restricting legitimate organizations, reducing the scope of peaceful organization, then that can have the inadvertent effect of actually increasing the pool of recruits for terrorism and resentment in communities that feel marginalized.

And I shared with him that one of the strengths in the United States, part of the reason why, although we're seeing potential lone wolf attacks inside the United States, that we have not seen this sort of systematic networks and cells developing in many of our Muslim communities or immigrant communities inside of the United States is, is that we've been very conscious to make sure that law enforcement is reaching out and cooperating and working with them, because they are our partners in this process. And the only way we're going to fight the poison that's being fed to them—to their young people through social media—is to make sure that they're our eyes and our ears and they're counseling us on how we can more effectively build trust and increase cooperation. And that's proven successful.

The same will be true here in Kenya. And I was very clear to President Kenyatta: Ultimately, the Kenyan Government is accountable to the Kenyan people, and it will find its way through this process in cooperation with us, but our experience and best practices tell us that rule of law, respecting civil society—in fact, embracing civil society, particularly in those communities that may be targeted for recruitment by organizations like al-Shabaab—that becomes more important the more significant the threat is. And not only is that practical advice, but it's the right thing to do, and it's consistent with the Kenyan Constitution and with the values that you heard President Kenyatta espouse.

Similarly, with respect to the rights of gays and lesbians, I've been consistent all across Africa on this. I believe in the principle of treating people equally under the law and that they are deserving of equal protection under the law and that the state should not discriminate against people based on their sexual orientation. And I say that, recognizing that there may be people who have different religious or cultural beliefs. But the issue is, how does the state operate relative to people?

If you look at the history of countries around the world, when you start treating people differently—not because of any harm they're doing anybody, but because they are different—that's the path whereby freedoms begin to erode and bad things happen. And when a government gets in the habit of treating people differently, those habits can spread.

And as an African American in the United States, I am painfully aware of the history of what happens when people are treated differently, under the law, and there's—were all sorts of rationalizations that were provided by the power structure for decades in the United States for segregation and Jim Crow and slavery, and they were wrong.

So I'm unequivocal on this. If somebody is a law-abiding citizen who is going about their business and working in a job and obeying the traffic signs—*[laughter]*—and doing all the other things that good citizens are supposed to do and not harming anybody, the idea that they are going to be treated differently or abused because of who they love is wrong. Full stop.

And the state does not need to weigh in on religious doctrine. The state just has to say, we're going to treat everybody equally under the law. And then, everybody else can have their own opinions. All right?

Q. President Kenyatta, could you address the questions as well, please?

President Kenyatta. Yes, we'll address them. [*Laughter*] First and foremost, I couldn't agree more on what President Obama has just said, especially with regard to the issue of the fight against terrorism. The support and the partnership that we have with the United States from an intelligence point of view, from a counterterrorism point of view, but more importantly, as he's also just mentioned, working with societies on how to prevent especially extremists from finding a better fodder for them to be able to develop and to grow and to nurture the terrorists of tomorrow. You've also heard him say—and indeed, we're truly grateful—his expansion under the agreements that we've signed of the cooperation and the assistance that we're getting from the United States.

So as a country, as a government, we are satisfied with what we're doing. We need to expand that more. Because the battle that we're fighting is not a Kenyan war. Kenya just happens to be the frontier of it, being a neighbor to a country that for a long time has not had any kind of formal government. We need to work much closer together to see how we can stabilize Somalia. We need to work much closer together to see how we can help the Somali Government which is in place, work together with its regional governments in order to continuously decrease the area and the space that al-Shabaab and the like have to operate and to train and to expert terror not just to Kenya, but also to other parts of the world.

So I'm looking forward to deepening the partnership that we already have. But we are satisfied with the kind of cooperation that we've had and the close working relationship between our various institutions.

You raised the issue of human rights, and I mentioned earlier that the kind of fight we're having right now, this is an existential fight for us; this is something that we have not been familiar with. Kenya has always been a country that has respected different religions. This issue of terrorism is new to us. And as it is new, we learn with each and every step. We are improving our capacities and our methods of dealing with terrorism. We, as a country, are willing to learn. We have undertaken fundamental reforms in our police services to help us to deal with this particular problem. We are continuing to partner with friends, like the United States, who are giving their own experiences as to how they have handled this particular problem, and we are keen to learn and to participate.

And I am certain that as we move forward, as we get better, as we learn from others, we will be able to handle the situation in a manner that does not, as President Obama said, encourage this kind of activity going forward on the basis of either marginalization or people feeling that particular communities are being targeted.

As a country, we have done a lot, especially under our new Constitution, our new devolved system of government that is aimed at providing and ensuring equity and development across the country. We have put a lot of resources into some of the previously neglected areas. In fact, today, as we sit, a huge portion—approximately 40 percent—of our national budget is being invested in those areas in an attempt to ensure that all communities in our country feel that the Government is for them all and that they are part and parcel of the social-economic development of our country.

So we will continue to improve. We will continue to learn. We will continue to participate with all communities, with civil society, to strengthen our partnership in order to ultimately be able to defeat this enemy.

With regard the second question, just like President Obama, I think we also need to be able to speak frankly about some of these things. And the fact of the matter is that Kenya and the United States, we share so many values: our common love for democracy, entrepreneurship, value for families. These are things that we share. But there are some things that we must admit we don't share, our culture, our societies don't accept. It is very difficult for us to be able to impose on people that which they themselves do not accept.

This is why I repeatedly say that, for Kenyans today, the issue of gay rights is really a nonissue. We want to focus on other areas that are day-to-day living for our people: The health issues that we have discussed with President Obama. These are critical. Issues of ensuring inclusivity and—of women, a huge section of society that is normally left out of the mainstream of economic development. What we can do in terms of infrastructure, what we can do in terms of education, in terms of our roads, in terms of giving our people power, encouraging entrepreneurship. These are the key focuses.

Maybe once, like you have overcome some of these challenges, we can begin to look at new ones. But as of now, the fact remains that this issue is not really an issue that is on the foremost mind of Kenyans, and that is the fact. Yes.

Kenya-U.S. Relations/Political Corruption

Q. Thank you very much. My name is Ken Mijungu. And I have two questions for President Obama and a question for President Uhuru Kenyatta. My first question to President Obama is, there has been a perception that Kenya and the U.S. had a strained relationship right from the time that we had a new Government. And in fact, we had several Western countries saying that, indeed, choices had consequences. Is your coming to Kenya sort of pressing a reset button to tell us that, indeed, you are ready to renew your relationship with this country that you've had a long-running relationship with for quite some years?

And my second question is about the funding. Indeed, you have told us about several agreements that have been signed. Does it concern your Government that, indeed, there is corruption that has—it's a word that has been taken head on by our very President? And in fact, some of his Cabinet Secretaries and peers and top Government officials are currently in court because of that. Does it concern your Government that, indeed, you're spending money in a country that the President himself is concerned about the level of corruption?

And to President Uhuru Kenyatta: There has also been a perception about Kenya looking increasingly east, especially after the general election in 2013, other things that were said. So is this also a sort of an announcement that, indeed, our traditional partners—i.e., the U.S.—reaffirm the commitment to renewing our agreements that we had in place and, indeed, we are going forward and working together? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, first of all, we don't need a reset——

President Kenyatta. Absolutely.

President Obama. ——because the U.S.-Kenya relationship and cooperation continued robustly throughout my Presidency. The fact that I didn't get here may have gotten people riled up. But frankly, given my familiarity and knowledge with Kenya, the fact that there were many countries across this vast continent that I had never visited, it was always my intention to

get to Kenya, but I wanted to make sure that people didn't think I was playing favorites so quick—[laughter]—immediately after I was elected.

Now, to be honest—and I think President Kenyatta would acknowledge this as well—there were deep concerns and tensions arising out of the violence that took place in an earlier election. We haven't made any secret about that. Accounting is being done of what happened there. And we continue to believe that norms have to be observed and all countries, big and small—not just African countries, but all countries—should be held to high standards in terms of making sure that elections, democratic processes, don't lead to violence.

The subsequent election that showed growth in the election process, the new Constitution that reflects one of the most progressive articulations of the principles of freedom and human dignity on the continent, that signals, I think, a very positive direction in where Kenya is moving.

President Kenyatta, during our meeting, acknowledged that there's still more work to be done. And our goal in dealing with all our partners is to be respectful, to recognize that ultimately sovereign countries have to make their own determinations about their destiny, but to be very clear about the values we care about. And we can engage and cooperate and work together and occasionally disagree. And that's not a rupture to the relationship; that's just the nature of friends. There are going to be times where we have disagreements. You just heard one before this. [Laughter] And that is part of the dialogue and the process that takes place between friends.

With respect to corruption, I think it is absolutely the right thing to do for President Kenyatta emphasize this. And as I stated to him during our meeting, this may be the biggest impediment to Kenya growing even faster and more people having even more opportunity, the fact that doing business and ordinary people just moving along in their lives here is constantly sapped by corruption at a high level and at a low level. International businesses are concerned if the price of investing in Kenya is 5 percent or 10 percent going to someplace that doesn't have to do with the project. It's just a math issue. If they've got a plan for a business, it's got a certain profit, and if suddenly some of that is taken off the top due to corruption, that makes that investment less attractive. And that's the judgments that they make.

And then, at a more grassroots level, if you've got some small-businessperson trying to open up a store and they find that they have to pay bribes here, there, everywhere, just to get a business started, that's inhibiting the kind of entrepreneurship that we highlighted earlier this morning.

And I think President Kenyatta is serious about going after this. As I indicated to him, if you look at the history of this—because the United States had, in the past, all kinds of corruption, dating back to the founding of the country. My hometown of Chicago was famous for Al Capone and bootleggers and bribery and police on the take. But what we were able to show is, is that over time, when people of integrity at the highest levels say, "This is a priority, we're going to stop this," and are willing to hold people at the highest levels accountable and not just the small-time corruption, that begins to change the culture. And it is important, I think, for the people of Kenya to say this is not the normal way of doing business and to say no to it at every level.

And that will require some change in habits. I mentioned sometimes civil servants, they don't feel like their salaries are high enough, and they think that, ah, it's just the way of doing business; I supplement my salary by imposing my own personal little tax to boost my salary.

And then, that suddenly becomes commonplace in a department or a bureaucracy. And you have to reverse that. And that may mean making sure that police officers or civil servants are paid properly and that they have sufficient benefits so that they don't feel obliged to do that. But some of it is also just breaking these habits and saying no.

And that comes from the top. And so I very much applaud President Kenyatta for initiating this campaign. It's going to require the support of the Kenyan people, and it's going to require some visible prosecutions. Because I mentioned to him, people aren't stupid. If they say—if they see an elected official and they know that their salary is there, and suddenly, they're driving through town in a very big car, and they see their cousin driving through the town with a very big car, and they're suddenly building a new house, and all that doesn't seem to match up with their salary, they don't have to be a forensic accountant to know what's going on. [Laughter]

And so, when it—when that happens, people have to be held into account. And the ideal that the President is putting forward is the right one. And now it's up to execution. And that won't be just the President's job alone, it will be the job of leadership both locally as well as nationally.

President Kenyatta. I think mine was with regard to looking east. And the first thing I want to say is that I couldn't agree more. We're not talking about a renewal, we're talking about a deepening. The United States, from the time of our independence, has been a very strong partner and ally. Kenya has benefited from AGOA, benefited heavily in our health sector, in education all these years. And that has never stopped. It's been continuous and ongoing.

But the key point is what I said when we were opening the summit this morning, and the fact is that Kenya as a country is not looking east or west. What we're looking to do is to make progress, is to develop our country, is to bring prosperity, is to build infrastructure. And we are looking to partner with our friends, old and new, to help us achieve the Kenyan dream, to help us achieve our social-economic agenda. And the U.S. happens to be a very strong partner of Kenya in that objective, as are many other countries in the world.

So I see no conflict, no contradiction. Actually, I just see deepening of partnerships that already existed, all with the objective of improving business for Kenyans, for the U.S., improving the social life of Kenyans, and deepening our people-to-people partnership as well through trade and investment.

So there is no contradiction whatsoever. We are just strengthening already good relations that exist between our two countries.

President Obama. Juliet Eilperin [Washington Post].

Africa-U.S. Relations/President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)/President Obama's African Aid Policies/African Energy Infrastructure/President Obama's Kenyan Relatives

Q. Thanks. President Obama, while you've launched multiple policy initiatives on Africa, it is unclear whether any of them will outlast your Presidency. What do you think needs to happen to ensure you have an Africa policy legacy as enduring as those of Presidents Bush and Clinton? And to what extent do you think you've met the expectations people here had of you as a son of Africa?

And speaking of your African roots, what did you talk about at dinner last night with roughly three dozen of your relatives? [Laughter] And had you met all of them before?

And then I have a question for President Kenyatta as well. President Kenyatta, could you spell out in concrete terms what's different in Kenya today because of President Obama's election, how his connection to Kenya has shaped your discussions today, and what aspects of his Africa policy do you think will endure after he's left office? Thank you.

President Obama. Let me, first of all, underscore that I am really proud of the work that previous administrations did here in Africa, and I've done everything I could to build on those successes. I mean, this isn't a beauty contest between Presidents; this is the U.S. Government and whatever the policies that need to be put in place in order for us to help our partner countries.

I've said before—and I'll repeat—I think President George W. Bush's PEPFAR initiative was as significant an achievement internationally as anything that we've done over the last several decades. It's saved millions of lives, which is why I've increased funding substantially for PEPFAR during the course of my Presidency and continue to build on what was initially a matter of just getting antivirals and treatment for HIV, and are now building greater capacity within those countries that have received PEPFAR funding so that they can do even more themselves in terms of their health care infrastructure.

So the bottom line is, I want to build on what's already been done, and then we want to fill gaps that still need to be filled. Along those lines, if you look at our Feed the Future program, for example, we've got millions of farmers across this continent who, as we speak, have benefited from increased yields, increased incomes, greater access to small loans that are making them more productive, greater access to market, linking up with technology in ways that assure that they get a fair price, all of which, since Africa is still disproportionately rural, is increasing incomes and spurring growth and building a middle class in the entire continent. And we can document the extraordinary progress that's been made there, and it is a model that's working and then has been supplemented with private sector investment that is further advancing the development of a more productive agricultural sector across the African Continent.

With respect to Power Africa, which was just launched a couple years ago, we set initially a goal of 10,000 megawatts of electricity being generated in sub-Saharan Africa. We were sufficiently successful in lining up interest and investments that we've now tripled that and set a goal of 30,000. And we're on our way to achieving that goal. We are well on track.

I noted that there was an article in a U.S. publication suggesting, well, there's no electricity being generated from this yet. The next time somebody is interested in how electricity gets generated, go back home and find out how long it takes to build a power plant. I mean, sometimes, these are long-term projects, but we have billions of dollars of transactions already locked in and billions more in the pipeline. And that is just on the traditional power grid side. That doesn't include all the innovative, off-grid electrical—or power generation that we witnessed just in those booths that we were passing at the Entrepreneurial Summit, using solar and other—bio-tech and other innovative ways to generate power in rural communities that are not going to be connected to the grid anytime soon.

So that's just two examples of initiatives that I'm confident will have a lasting effect, not because they were initiated by me, but because they fill an extraordinary need. If we can get sub-Saharan Africa to be electrified at the same levels as Asia is, that alone is going to drive economic growth exponentially. I mean, the productivity that is delivered as a consequence of just access to power: kids suddenly being able to read and do their homework at night; women relieved of some of the burdens of collecting firewood and how they are able to use basic

appliances that we take for granted; farmers being able to improve their yields—it's a game-changer.

But we're not going to know exactly what that looks like 10 years from now. And I suspect that the next President, building off of what we've already set up, will learn what's working really well and what's not working so well and make some tweaks. And I don't have pride of authorship. I hope that they figure out even better ways for us to continue the things that we've started, just as we, I think, have refined and improved the excellent work that was done by Presidents Clinton and Presidents Bush.

In terms of what I was talking about with my family—I—mostly we were just catching up. There's more immediate family that I had known well from previous visits. There was some more extended family that I had not met before. My sister Auma, who I'm very close to and stay in close contact with, I think helped to make sure that everybody was represented. I think the people of Kenya will be familiar with the need to manage family politics sometimes. [Laughter] In these extended families, there are cousins and uncles and aunties that show up that you didn't know existed, but you're always happy to meet. And there were lengthy explanations, in some cases, of the connections. [Laughter] But it was a wonderful time.

And part of the challenge that I've had during the course of my Presidency is that, given the demands of the job and the bubble, it's very—I can't come here and just go up country and visit for a week and meet everybody. And I—that's partly, actually, what I had to explain, was—begging for forgiveness—that once I'm a private citizen, I will have more freedom to reconnect and to be involved and engaged in some of the work that needs to be done, because some of these communities are very poor.

I'm more restricted, ironically, as President of the United States than I am as—than I will be as a private citizen in terms of some of the hands-on and direct help that I'd like to give, partly just because of schedule, but partly also because of making sure that in my relationship to Kenya, I am understood to be operating as the President of the United States, and that my interaction is with the Government of the—and the non-for-profits and the organizations that represent all the people of any particular country.

President Kenyatta. There's one area—and it's not specifically African, because I think all the initiatives he's mentioned we're all happy and proud of—but the one initiative that I would really want to focus on is the fact that I think President Obama will strongly be remembered in Africa for his focus on the youth of this continent; the focus on the young people of this continent, to be able to extract their talents, their abilities. And he's been very focused on this both with the Young Leaders Initiative, with the GES that we've just been attending, really helping us unblock the full potential of Africa's youth and young men and women.

So this, I think, will be the key legacy that President Obama will be remembered for on this continent for a long time to come.

That said, Judy—or Jacque, rather.

U.S.-Kenya Travel Restrictions/President Obama's Relationship With Kenya

Q. Jacque Maribe, Citizen Television. President Obama, and President Kenyatta, you spoke about direct flights. Are you working on that to launch them as soon as possible? How soon? If soon, can we know that?

And, President Obama, the U.S. has been issuing travel advisories against Kenya. This has had a devastating effect on its tourism. It's the second foreign exchange. And is the U.S.

planning to take it easy on that? And finally, what are your personal plans for Kenya after your Presidency? Thank you.

President Obama. With respect to direct flights, there are very specific protocols and security issues that have to be worked through and sorted out. We sent representatives of our Department of Transportation and Homeland Security to work with Kenyan officials. I think real progress has been made. I don't have a date certain in front of me, and I wouldn't want to make a guess, and then if we're late, you'll call me and say, you lied. [Laughter] So—but I think that—I anticipate that if we can get all the issues squared away, that this is something that has great potential and obviously would have a beneficial impact on U.S. travel to Kenya, both for business and for tourism.

With respect to the travel advisories, this is not something that I meddle with. This is something that our State Department and our intelligence communities make assessments on. They are provided in part for our Embassy staff and personnel so that they can be mindful of circumstances. But we are bound to also then provide the general public protection—or the same information that we provide our teams on the ground, for understandable reasons. I think the general public would be disturbed if we were saying one thing to folks who are working here and another thing to an ordinary tourist who was traveling.

I recognize the concerns, and I do think that despite the seriousness of the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabaab, that—in part because of media attention probably even more than travel advisories—that threat can oftentimes be exaggerated. And that's unfortunate. And part of my answer, I guess, to that problem is to come here and visit and to show this extraordinary country and the extraordinary progress that's been made.

But the specifics around travel advisories—those are a judgment call that are made by our experts. It's not something that I weigh in on. It's not something that is subject to political decisionmaking. And my solemn goal is to make sure that we are working urgently with President Kenyatta and the administration so that there's no need for the advisory because we will have greatly reduced these threats.

And there may be ways in which we can refine them so that, for example, traveling to game parks may be different than being in other circumstances. And that's something that we can always discuss and explore at a staff level.

Oh, did I—was there a third question? What are my plans? Well, I—here's what I can guarantee. I'll be back. The next time I'm back, I may not be wearing a suit. [Laughter] The first time I came here I was in jeans and a backpack. And one of the challenges of traveling and visiting Kenya is that I'm much more constrained now than I will be. And I think that you can anticipate not only me being back, but probably more important for everybody, Michelle being back, who—and Malia and Sasha coming back, because they have a great love for this country and its people and its beauty. And obviously, I've got family connections.

And my hope is, is that some of the philanthropic work that I do after my Presidency is over builds on some of the things that we've been doing now. I'm not going to stop being interested in the young people of Kenya and the young people of Africa and developing the talent and the leaders—talented leaders and entrepreneurs that are going to help make this country and the world prosper. And so you can anticipate that I'll continue to make those contributions where I can. Okay?

President Kenyatta. Great stuff.

President Obama. All right? Thank you very much, everybody. *Asante sana.*

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:46 p.m. at the State House. In his remarks, the President referred to his sister Auma Obama.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Joint news conferences :: Kenya, President Kenyatta.

Locations: Nairobi, Kenya.

Names: Bush, George W.; Clinton, William J.; Kenyatta, Uhuru; Obama, Auma; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha".

Subjects: Africa : Agricultural production :: Improvement efforts; Africa : Energy infrastructure, improvement efforts; Africa : Young African Leaders Initiative, White House; African Growth and Opportunity Act, reauthorization; Burundi, political unrest and violence; Civil rights : Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, equality; Developing countries : Health and medical care, promotion efforts; Developing countries : Women, status; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Environment : Conservation :: Wildlife preservation, strengthening efforts; HIV/AIDS : Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, President's; Immigration and naturalization : Visa policy, U.S.; Kenya : Democracy efforts; Kenya : Government accountability and transparency, strengthening efforts; Kenya : Government officials, corruption issues; Kenya : President; Kenya : President Obama's visit; Kenya : Relations with U.S.; Kenya : Security cooperation with U.S.; Kenya : Terrorism; Kenya : Trade with U.S.; Kenya : Transportation, cooperation with U.S.; Kenya : Visa policy, U.S.; Somalia : U.S. assistance; South Sudan : Political unrest and violence; State, Department of : Travel advisories; Terrorism : al-Shabaab terrorist organization; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Global threat.

DCPD Number: DCPD201500525.